

South America? It will actually accelerate that decline. We are already running a trade deficit with Chile, and it will grow greatly under this.

And with Singapore, yes, we had a little tiny trade surplus; but it is down by 50 percent in 1 year, and like with Mexico under NAFTA, we will be running huge and growing trade deficits with Singapore.

We cannot continue to run these deficits year in year out, export American jobs year in and year out, export America's industrial manufacturing base and continue to be a great economy. We are headed toward disaster here. In fact, the percent of our GDP that we are losing with these trade deficits is now exceeding the percent that Argentina was experiencing before their economic implosion or the Asian nations before their economic implosion.

Mr. Speaker, how long will people around the world continue to lend us money to buy foreign goods and undermine our own economy? This is absolutely absurd what we are doing here, and we are going to do more of it. Only inside the Washington, D.C. beltway would people look at \$500 billion trade deficits, loss of our manufacturing base, the importation of skilled foreign workers and say this is great for our country because one or two multinational corporations that nominally are based in the United States, they probably do not pay taxes here, but still pretend they are American companies, will get a little bit under this agreement.

WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 3 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of debate going on here in Washington, D.C. over our reasons for going to war in Iraq. Yesterday, I had the privilege of meeting with some men I believe we should hear more from. They were Marines injured in Operation Iraqi Freedom currently being treated at Bethesda Naval Hospital, Marines like Mark Graunke, Jr., a staff sergeant who lost his left hand, three of his fingers and his left eye and took shrapnel in removing landmines in theater on July 8 earlier this month.

What Mark told me, Congressman, I am not a hero, I was just doing my job for the good old United States of America, and it was a privilege. Then I talked to another sergeant whose name I will omit, but a man who the Navy corpsman told me may not make it. He was flanked by his mom and his dad and the mother of his two children and he looked me in the eye, with tubes coming out, and he simply said, Congressman, the only thing I worry about is that we will pull out early and we will not finish the job and it will mean all of the sacrifices we made over there were for nothing.

Then there was Michael Jones who took an RPG shell in the leg, looked me in the eye and told me he was glad the man fired at him instead of the vehicle where five of his fellow Marines were doing a search. I said, Lance Corporal Jones, are you telling me you are glad you were shot with a rocket in the leg? He said, yes, sir, I am sure it saved lives.

These are all men that know one thing that the American people know, that freedom is worth fighting for, freedom is worth dying for. It was about the freedom of the Iraqi people and securing the safety and freedom of the American people that this President moved against a brutal tyrant in Saddam Hussein, who most assuredly coddled terrorists in his 30-year reign in Iraq, and admitted to the weapons of mass destruction and used weapons of mass destruction against his own countrymen and against his neighbors.

Mr. Speaker, these brave Marines currently being treated at Bethesda Naval Hospital taught me much, reminded me of much: that freedom is worth fighting for, freedom is worth dying for, and we will stay the course until we deliver freedom to the families and children and the legacy of Iraq.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 1 minute.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter into the RECORD an editorial that was in my local newspaper, the Asbury Park Press, on Sunday relative to the Medicare prescription drug issue; and I want to highlight a couple of statements that were made by that editorial.

It says, "Both Houses of Congress have passed what they describe as historic plans to extend prescription coverage to Medicare recipients. They are historic all right. They begin to chip away at one of government's most successful programs. Medicare has worked well for millions of seniors since its inception in 1966. Its administrative costs of 2 percent are far lower than those of private insurers. The notion that competition in the private marketplace will provide consumers with more choices, driving down the cost of drugs is a tired philosophy that has failed to deliver promised benefits in the areas of health care, transportation, energy and telecommunications. Providing extended coverage to their existing Medicare program would offer better benefits for less cost, be far more efficient and easier for recipients to use and be less prone to the vagaries of the marketplace, quick to abandon those that they cannot make a profit from."

[From the Asbury Park Press, July 13, 2003]

DRUG PLAN A PLACEBO

Both Houses of Congress have passed what they describe as historic plans to extend pre-

scription coverage to Medicare recipients. They're historic all right; they begin to chip away at one of government's most successful programs.

Rather than turning it over to HMOs and private insurers as the Republicans in Congress want to do, Medicare should be expanded to include an affordable, guaranteed prescription drug component, as Rep. Frank Pallone, D-N.J., and others prefer.

Both the Senate and House versions of the bill are fatally flawed. Even the most vocal supporters of a prescription drug benefit have expressed severe reservations about the legislation, including the American Association of Retired Persons.

Among our many concerns:

Both bills fail to adequately address the problem of skyrocketing drug prices. A study released last week found that the price of drugs most commonly used by the elderly rose more than three times the rate of inflation last year. Because co-pays and deductibles under the proposed plans are pegged to the cost of drugs, coverage will become unaffordable unless spiraling prices can be brought under control.

The co-pays and deductibles are too high and the benefits too meager. The two versions would cover an estimated one-third of the annual cost of drugs up to \$4,500 and up to two-thirds of drug bills exceeding \$12,000. The version supported by Pallone would cover 80 percent of the costs.

The House version could dismantle New Jersey's Senior Gold and Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Aged and Disabled programs and force seniors to enroll in far less generous plans run by HMOs and other private insurers. The Senate version, the lesser of two evils, would allow for the continuation of Senior Gold and PAAD.

The House bill does not guarantee coverage in areas where private firms are unwilling to write policies.

Employers are likely to reduce retiree benefits, leaving millions with less coverage than they have today. According to a Congressional Budget Office estimate, 37 percent of retirees with employer prescription drug coverage would lose it.

The substantial coverage gaps are confusing and are likely to discourage enrollment in the program.

By allowing highly subsidized private insurers to offer supplemental benefits, relatively healthy people will be drawn to private coverage, losing their choice of doctors and increasing costs to taxpayers.

Medicare has worked well for millions of seniors since its inception in 1966. Its administrative costs of 2 percent are far lower than those of private insurers. The notion that competition in the private marketplace will provide consumers with more choices, driving down the cost of drugs, is a tired philosophy that has failed to deliver promised benefits in the areas of health care, transportation, energy and telecommunications.

Providing extended coverage through the existing Medicare program would offer better benefits for less cost, be far more efficient and easier for recipients to use, and be less prone to the vagaries of a marketplace quick to abandon those it can't make a profit from.

The two bills on the table are driven more by politics than a sincere desire to give seniors the affordable, life-saving and life-enhancing drugs they deserve. Seniors and senior organizations should insist that their elected representatives hold out for a comprehensive program that offers real relief, not just a placebo.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair

declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 51 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m. today.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BASS) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

Lord, in the book of Joshua, the life of anyone who killed another was forfeit. Once the monarchy was established, it would be the duty of the king to see that justice was done. But until then Israel was a tribal society and it fell upon the family of the victim to set things right. No wonder, Lord, there is so much lingering hatred and bloody violence in the world of tribal communities, even to this day.

So, Lord, You spoke to Joshua and commanded him to appoint "cities of refuge" where the person who kills another inadvertently or without intent could find refuge from the dead man's next of kin. In a time when there are more refugees than in any other time in history, we pray for all of those refugees who seek justice and long for peace. Help fragile nations to be grounded in law and order. Protect peacemakers and those who enforce the law, both here and in unstable areas like Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Iraq.

Help people everywhere to bury vengeance with forgiveness, temper justice with mercy, and transform indifference with compassion.

In You, Lord, America takes refuge, now and forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BARRETT) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

THE U.S.-CHILE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

(Mrs. BIGGERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, over the last 6 years, the United States has lost nearly one-third of its share of Chile's import market.

Not coincidentally, the plunge occurred while other nations were implementing their own free trade agreements with Chile and getting market share there. Since the early 1990s, Chile signed free trade agreements with Canada, Mexico and the four nations of MERCOSUR. And earlier this year, implementation of the European Union-Chile's FTA led to an immediate surge in exports to Chile from European firms in direct competition with U.S. firms.

The lost Chilean sales not only cost the United States its long-time ranking as the top exporting Nation to Chile, it also cost U.S. businesses and workers thousands of higher-paying, export-related jobs.

U.S. businesses have the expertise and the resources to compete globally, if they are allowed to do so on equal terms with our competitors.

It is time to pass the U.S.-Chile free trade agreement and give our companies the opportunity they need to stay competitive in Chile.

TIME FOR U.S. TO LEAVE IRAQ

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, it is time for the United States to get out of Iraq. But this administration, whose entry strategy was based on falsehood, with no exit strategy, has trapped our troops in Iraq and exposed them to greater harm. The total number of American casualties is now 232.

Here is what needs to be done diplomatically: the United Nations must be brought in. Negotiations for an exit must begin now. An exit agreement with the United Nations must involve the U.S. letting go of the contracting process; Halliburton, Brown and Root, et cetera. The U.S. must also take over the management, accounting, and distribution to the Iraqi people of the oil. Additionally, a transition from U.N. control to a self-determining governing structure by and for the Iraqi people must be planned. Finally, the administration, which unwisely ordered the bombing, must fund the reconstruction.

It was wrong to go into Iraq. It is wrong to stay in Iraq. U.S. out. U.N. in. Let us support our troops by bringing them home.

SUPPORT FREE TRADE PARTNERSHIP WITH CHILE AND SINGAPORE

(Mr. CRANE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CRANE. Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of a free trade partnership with

both Chile and Singapore. We should all support the model that Chile provides for economic, social, and democratic development. Chile more than doubled its GDP during the 1990s. It was the fourth fastest growing economy in the world. This extraordinary growth was fostered by low inflation, a balanced budget, clear regulatory accountability, a strong financial system, and a competitive economy. It ranks high, higher than many developed countries on international indices measuring economic success.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement is a comprehensive, leading-edge agreement that includes U.S. trade negotiating objectives and strengthens an important economic relationship with a strategic U.S. trading partner. The U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement sets many precedents, including lower barriers to trade and high-technology products and services and establishing new standards for intellectual property protection.

I urge my colleagues to support both of these critically portrayed agreements that we have negotiated that will set a positive example in both regions of the world.

REPUBLICAN ECONOMIC PLAN CAUSES SKYROCKETING DEBT FOR OUR NATION

(Mr. THOMPSON of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, it has been 802 days since President Bush and the Republican Party embarked on their economic plan for our country. During that time, the national debt has increased by \$1,81,528,804,140.

According to the U.S. Department of Treasury, yesterday at 4:30 p.m. eastern standard time, the Nation's outstanding debt was \$6,721,854,190,498.

Furthermore, in fiscal year 2003, interest on our national debt, or the debt tax, is \$277,768,492,816 through June 30.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1472

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1472.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

PARTIAL-BIRTH ABORTION

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, on June 4 we passed a ban on the terrible procedure called partial-birth abortion. Now, 48 days later, we have not even gone to conference to work out the differences with the other body. Why?